

Remarks

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9, 11-17, 19-22, 26, and 28-29 are pending in the application, with claims 1 and 16 being the independent claims. Claims 1, 11, 16, and 29 are sought to be amended. Claim 10 is sought to be cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute similar or broader claims, with respect to amended and cancelled claims, in the future. No new matter has been entered by these amendments.

Applicants have retracted the withdrawal of claims 13 and 21 pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.141(a). These claims were drawn to a non elected species. However, their respective generic, linking claims, claims 1 and 16, are now allowable. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner bring claims 13 and 21 back into the pending application.

The Examiner is thanked for the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 10-11.

This amendment and reply should be entered after final because it places the claims in condition for allowance, as indicated by the Examiner. If the Examiner believes further amendments are advisable to expedite prosecution, the Examiner is asked to contact Applicants' representative at the number below.

Based on the above amendments and following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph

The Examiner rejected claim 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Although Applicant disagrees with this rejection, as the term "coupled" allows for elements to be between two elements while those elements are coupled, Applicants have amended the claims to clarify the claims, and in order to expedite prosecution. Accordingly, based on the amendments, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a and b)

Claims 1, 2, 12, 14-17, 20, 22, and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,245,464 to Jensen ("Jensen"). Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9, 12, 14-17, 19, 20, 22, and 28-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2002/0011573 to Van Dijsseldonk et al. ("Dijsseldonk"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Although Applicants disagree with the rejections, Applicants have amended claims 1 and 16 to include subject matter substantially identical (in claim 1) and similar (in claim 16) to the allowable subject matter found in now cancelled claim 10. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1 and 16. Also, at least based on their respective dependencies from claims 1 and 16, claims 2, 4-7, 12, 14-15, 17, 19, 20, 22, and 28-29 should be allowed.

As discussed above, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.141(a), Applicants also request that claims 13 and 21 be brought back into the application and found allowable as being dependent on respective allowed, generic, linking claims 1 and 16.

Conclusion

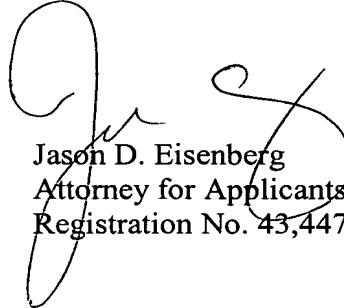
All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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